

MUSEUM NEWS

THE TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART
FOUNDED BY EDWARD DRUMMOND LIBBEY

NUMBER 82

TOLEDO, OHIO

JUNE, 1938



FLORENCE SCOTT LIBBEY



MUSEUM NEWS

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*Art is that science whose laws applied to all things made by man make them
more pleasing to the senses.*

George W. Stevens.

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD

THE debt we owe to Florence Scott Libbey we would not pay in the common coinage of words, nor compound in the currency of fine phrases. Great as were her benefactions, the blessing of her spirit far transcended them. Important as were her contributions, the inspiration of her interest far surpassed them.

Neither would we merely record her generosity to this institution and her solicitude for its every endeavor. Rather will we treasure in our hearts the joy which we have had in working with her, the reward which has come from her approbation, the incentive offered by her enthusiasm.

Nor are we alone content to express the sense of loss which we feel in her death. Rather will we ever keep fresh in our minds the nobility of her crystal character, the majesty of her gentle dignity.

Our deep and enduring obligation to her we will discharge through devotion to her memory, fidelity to the welfare of the Museum which she dearly loved, adherence to the ideals which her own life richly typified.

Though modest and retiring, times of need found within her unexpected reserves of strength and firmness. In early hours of doubt she reinforced the faith of our Founder, encouraged his purposes. Hers was never a passive interest. She gave as richly of

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her thought as of her means. Of rare wisdom in things both artistic and practical, confronted with problems of moment, she brought to their solution keen penetration and clear judgment. Her concern extended to every detail of the Museum and its conduct; her thoughtful contribution to its collections, its architecture, its organization, its activities.

This Museum has known no greater, can hope to know no truer, devotion than that of the dear friend whom we mourn. May the recollection of her sweet determination, her fond concern, her high idealism for this institution ever be a guide to us.

FLORENCE SCOTT LIBBEY

MEMORIAL services for Florence Scott Libbey were held on the afternoon of March 22, 1938, in the Libbey Gallery where hang most of the great paintings which she and Mr. Libbey had collected, with which they had lived for many years, and which they had deeply loved. These services were conducted by the Reverend R. Malcolm Ward, who paid a most fitting tribute to Mrs. Libbey, speaking as follows:

"These walls assume a new meaning for us all today, as we gather here reverently to do honor to the memory of a noble soul. It is not unreasonable to believe that here in the midst of their valued treasures, here, where their efforts to enrich the lives of their fellows have reached such glorious fruition, should be the meeting place of those souls again united in the perfect life, in which there is no parting. It is not unreasonable to believe that here, among familiar and beloved friends, the spirit of Florence Scott Libbey now dwells and sanctifies this place.

"The part played by Mrs. Libbey in creating this institution was not a minor one. Concern for the public welfare was natural to her. Her grandfather, Jessup Scott, pioneer, was resident in this valley in 1833. His belief in the future of the inland city was largely responsible for his many benefactions. He gave the property on which was founded the University of Toledo. His historiographer termed him, "a great power in all matters pertaining to the public welfare." Likewise, her father, Maurice Scott, was noted for his forward look and concern for the public welfare.

"It was natural, therefore, that Mrs. Libbey, devoted to her father and grandfather, should have continued their work. As a young woman she travelled extensively. Her broad cultural background fitted her admirably for the part she was to play as the co-builder of this great institution.

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"In 1909, her father's home and the adjacent property became the site on which the first unit of the Museum was erected. At the opening of this first unit in 1912, Mrs. Libbey gave the collections of ceramics and Oriental art, and formed a group of paintings to show the historic development of that art in America. These were given as a memorial to her father and included paintings by Copley, Stuart, West, Homer and Inness. To this memorial, many additions have been made.

"Mrs. Libbey's interest in the Museum was hallowed by a direct personal touch. Many of the Egyptian antiquities were acquired by Mr. Libbey and herself for the Museum on their several visits to Egypt. When these ceramics and Oriental things were placed, she personally cleaned and helped install them. They were so much a part of her that she feared to entrust them to less loving hands. Her rare judgment and valued counsel were always at the disposal of the Museum which she served for many years as Vice-President and as a Trustee. Her excellent taste as a member of the purchasing committee has enriched the Museum in many ways.

"For years before Mr. Libbey's passing, she constantly supported him in his dreams of the completed structure and the educational aims he envisioned. After his death, she surrendered a life interest in his estate to make immediate the completed wings. This last was her own thought, coupled with a desire to give employment, in Toledo, to a large number of workmen seriously handicapped by the depression. These buildings incorporate many of her own ideas, notably the Peristyle which was derived wholly from her suggestion.

"Her personal life was characterized by her pride of race, her nobility of character, her innate modesty and a rare sense of humor. She never failed in courage during a long illness and resented having even her best friends suggest that she had any physical reservations. Almost her last spoken words were a friendly jest between her nurse and herself.

"By her passing, we have lost, for a while, a friend and benefactor. But, by the projection of her personality through her lovable qualities, her broad outlook and her supreme courage, she will influence the life of this community for countless generations to come. Her immortal spirit now hallows these halls as her life enriched them. May she rest in peace and may light perpetual shine upon her, O Lord."

Preceding and following the services music from the organ, the gift of Mr. Libbey's sisters, was transmitted from the Peristyle.

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BROOK BY MOONLIGHT

RALPH ALBERT BLAKELOCK

GIFT OF MR. AND MRS. EDWARD DRUMMOND LIBBEY

THE MAURICE A. SCOTT GALLERY

“ONE of the strongest inherent traits of man is that which impelled him, during all time, in all places and under all conditions, to give artistic expression to that divine something within, which has set him apart as the highest form of life. The historian and his precursor, the archaeologist, revealing to us the pages of the dim far-reaching past, fail to disclose a period in which man has not surrounded himself with evidences of his artistic handicraft. It is, therefore, an instinct coeval with those suggesting habitation, food and raiment.

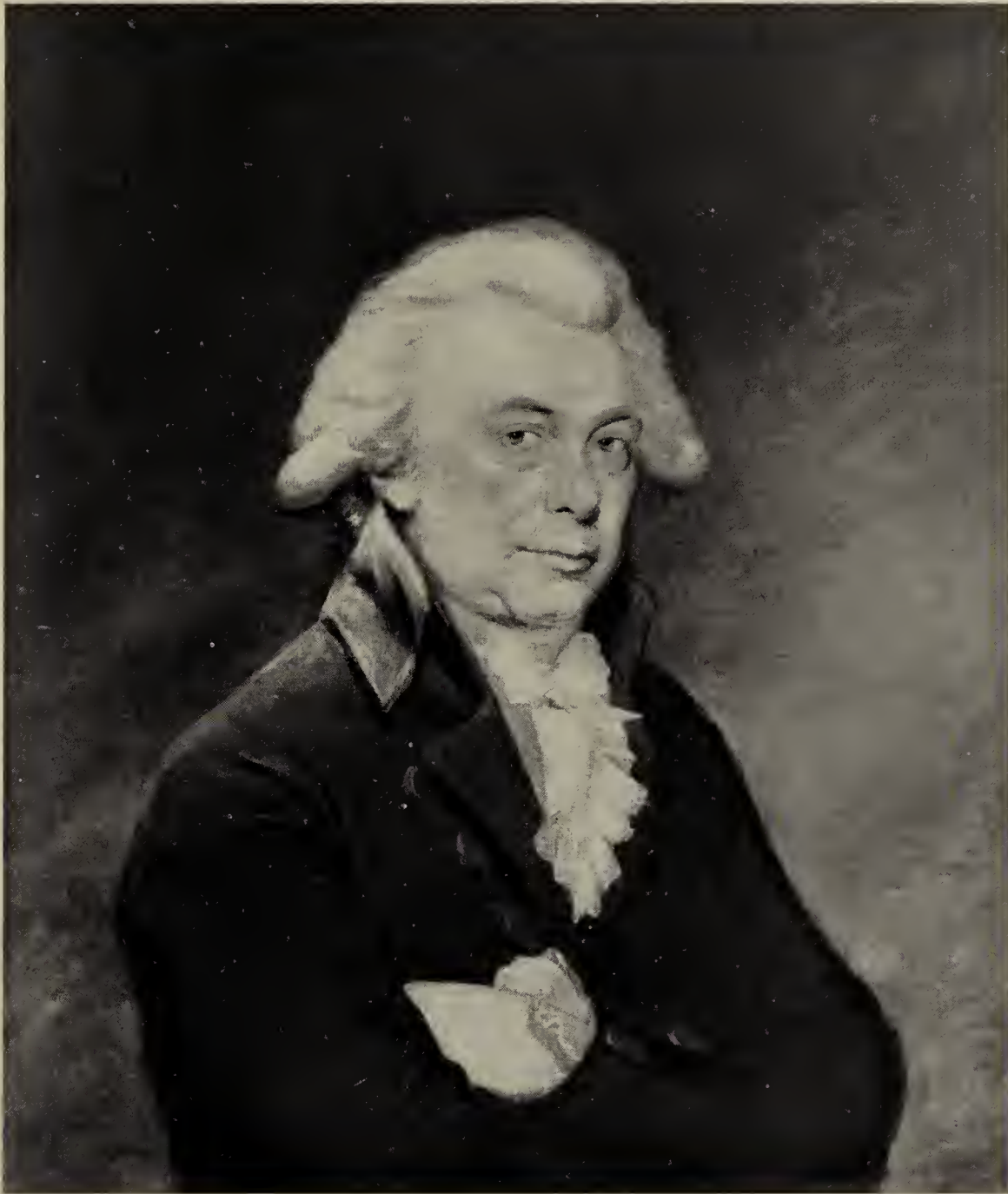
“By this reason, then, art knows no country and exists unbounded by geographical lines, for wherever and whenever man appears, there also is disclosed this, his divine and inborn attribute. It may slumber as all the intellects have slumbered in the dark ages of Europe, of Greece, or again far back in the ages of stone—always, however, it is but a slumbering, which awakens to a glorious renaissance—the sleep restorative—the winter of the intellect, which in season responds to the tender, yet insistent call of spring.

“The renaissance in Europe, so richly illumined by that passage pertaining to art, saw the awakening of the mentalities in all directions of thought and endeavor, and the discovery of the Americas was but one manifestation of its manifold activities. Michael Angelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Dürer, Rembrandt, Hals and that galaxy of other great luminaries shone resplendently in its triumphant culmination.

“Meanwhile, the slender tide of immigration had firmly established on our shores a new center of human hopes, endeavors, ambitions and inspirations. No master hand was there to guide their performance, no masterpiece to instil in them the desire of emulation, and yet from these virgin surroundings, from the turmoil of readjustment and all its attending crudities, emerged the forefathers of American art, unnurtured, unproclaimed, unfavored by environment, but fully equipped to compel forthwith the admiration and reverence of the older world.

“Benjamin West, born in 1738, reared in primitive simplicity in an obscure Quaker village, felt stirring within him that desire, as old as the human race itself, and with pigment secured from the Indians set to work developing those talents which, while they were recognized at home, received perhaps fuller appreciation in England, where he followed Sir Joshua Reynolds as president of the Royal Academy. His contemporary, John Singleton Copley,

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PORTRAIT OF LORD ABERCROMBIE

JOHN SINGLETON COPLEY

born in Boston in 1737, also, when attaining his full powers, found in England that appreciation more congenial to his art. There he died full of honor, and there his son became, three times, the Lord Chancellor of the nation. Gilbert Stuart, son of the New England snuff-maker, became the favored of fashion, a leading painter in London, but returned to his native America that he might bequeath to us those noble portraits of the great Washington.

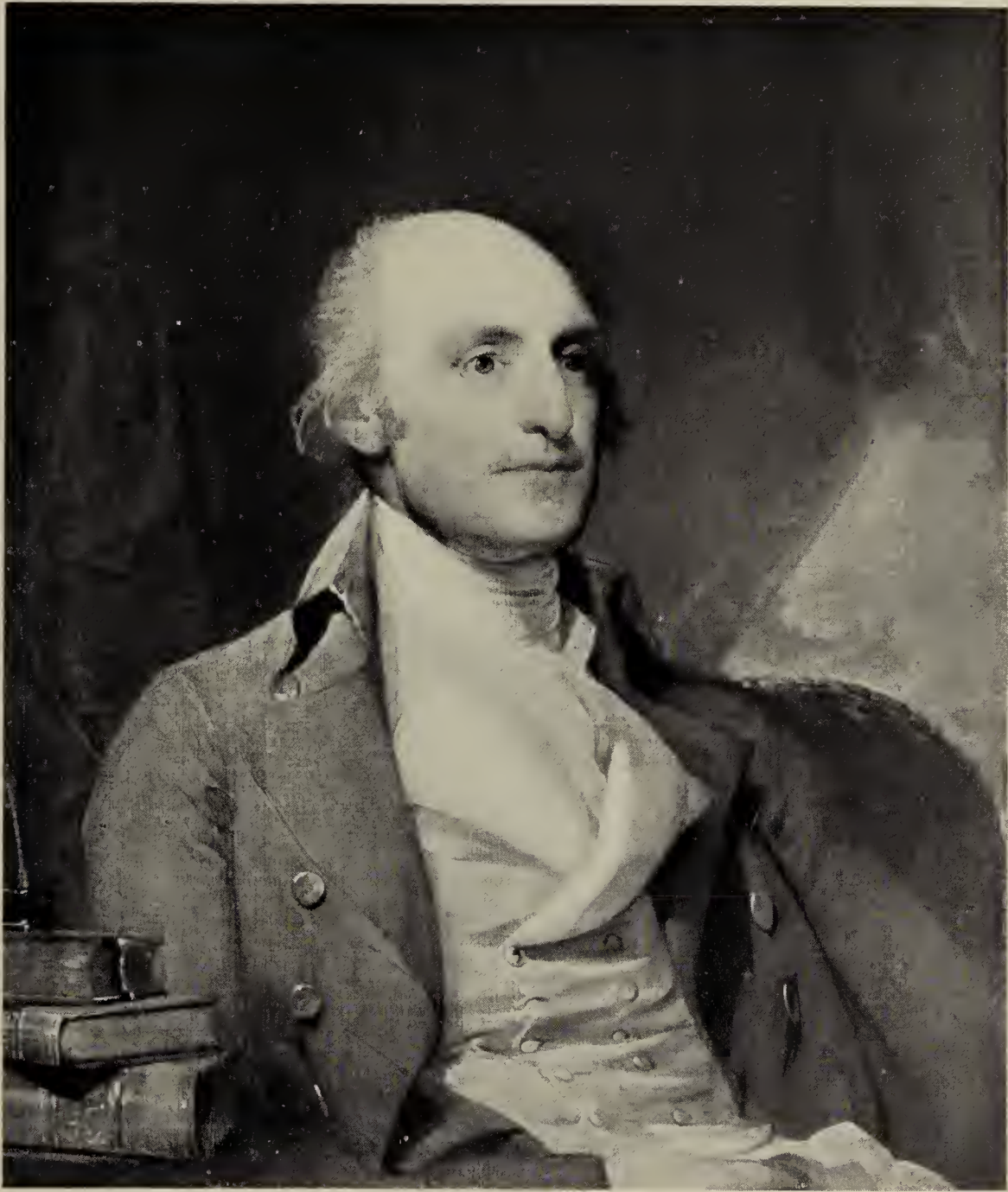


THE HERO RETURNED

BENJAMIN WEST

“Great names were those of Reynolds, Gainsborough, Raeburn and Romney, and greatly were they revered, but our Americans, although they sprang from a far less nurtured soil, at no period failed to make their impress in the exhibitions and upon the painters and the public of the older world. West,

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SIR ASHLEY COOPER

GILBERT STUART

Peale, Stuart, Trumbull, Allston, and scores of others upheld gloriously the honor of early American art.

"In 1808, John Vanderlyn, the boy from a Hudson River blacksmith shop, received from the hand of Napoleon a medal awarded his picture then hanging in the Salon. Thread your way through the streets of any American city, knocking at each door with the inquiry, 'Who, pray, is John Vanderlyn?' and who, think you, will make answer?"

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PORTRAIT OF MRS. BURNETT OF PHILADELPHIA

THOMAS SULLY

“The number of Americans who really appreciate what our men have done is pitifully small, yet at no period have our painters failed to make their full contribution to the art progress of the world.

“Had it not been for the American painters in London, during the latter half of the Victorian era, modern English art would have been deprived of much of its luster. Sargent and many others were an active leaven, while that great American master, Whistler, alone magnificently assailed the anecdotal impotency

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THE GOOSE GIRL

GEORGE INNESS

of the times, with pen-point or canister, laughter or thunderbolt, broadsword or rapier, whichever was at the moment best calculated to administer the shock necessary for the revivification of much of the art of not only London Town, but of the world.

“When the Barbizon painters forsook the classical pageantry of the studios for the palpitating fields and woodland, so also did our own men of the Hudson River School, of their own volition, go direct to nature for their motives; and thus did Doughty, Cole, Durand, Kensett, the two Harts and others of the group play well their parts in the glorious upbuilding of American art which produced an Inness, a Wyant, a Martin, and their fellows in the past, and score upon score of masters of the present day, who have carried American art to those heights from which its effulgence radiates to all shores and compels the admiration and reverence of the world.

“If there lurks, in the rapidly clearing minds of Americans, any doubt as to the exalted position our country has taken in the world of art, it is not the fault of our great masters, but rather that of our great public. Such fallacies as these, do they still exist, it is the mission of The Toledo Museum of Art to dispel, in its field of influence, as do the other museums of the country in theirs. The present inaugural exhibition can by no means, with

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THE SPIRIT OF DAWN

ALBERT P. RYDER

the space at its disposal, give all our great men representation. We do know, however, that those examples shown will bring our people face to face with the work of many of the greatest of our painters and sculptors. Our loyalty to American art will be fully made manifest as time progresses."

These paragraphs were written by George W. Stevens in the Foreword to the Catalogue of the Inaugural Exhibition of the Toledo Museum. The first fruit of their promise of this institution's loyalty to American art came immediately upon the close of that exhibition. Early in 1912 Florence Scott Libbey established in memory of her father the Maurice A. Scott Gallery.

It was her thought that the collection which she then installed therein and to which she later made many additions should tell the story of the development of painting in this country. Included in the group at the beginning were a number of fine American paintings which had previously hung in the Libbey home, together with others which Mrs. Libbey had acquired specifically for the gallery. Some of these had been shown in the Inaugural Exhibition of the Museum, and were the work of then outstanding

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SUNLIGHT ON THE COAST

WINSLOW HOMER

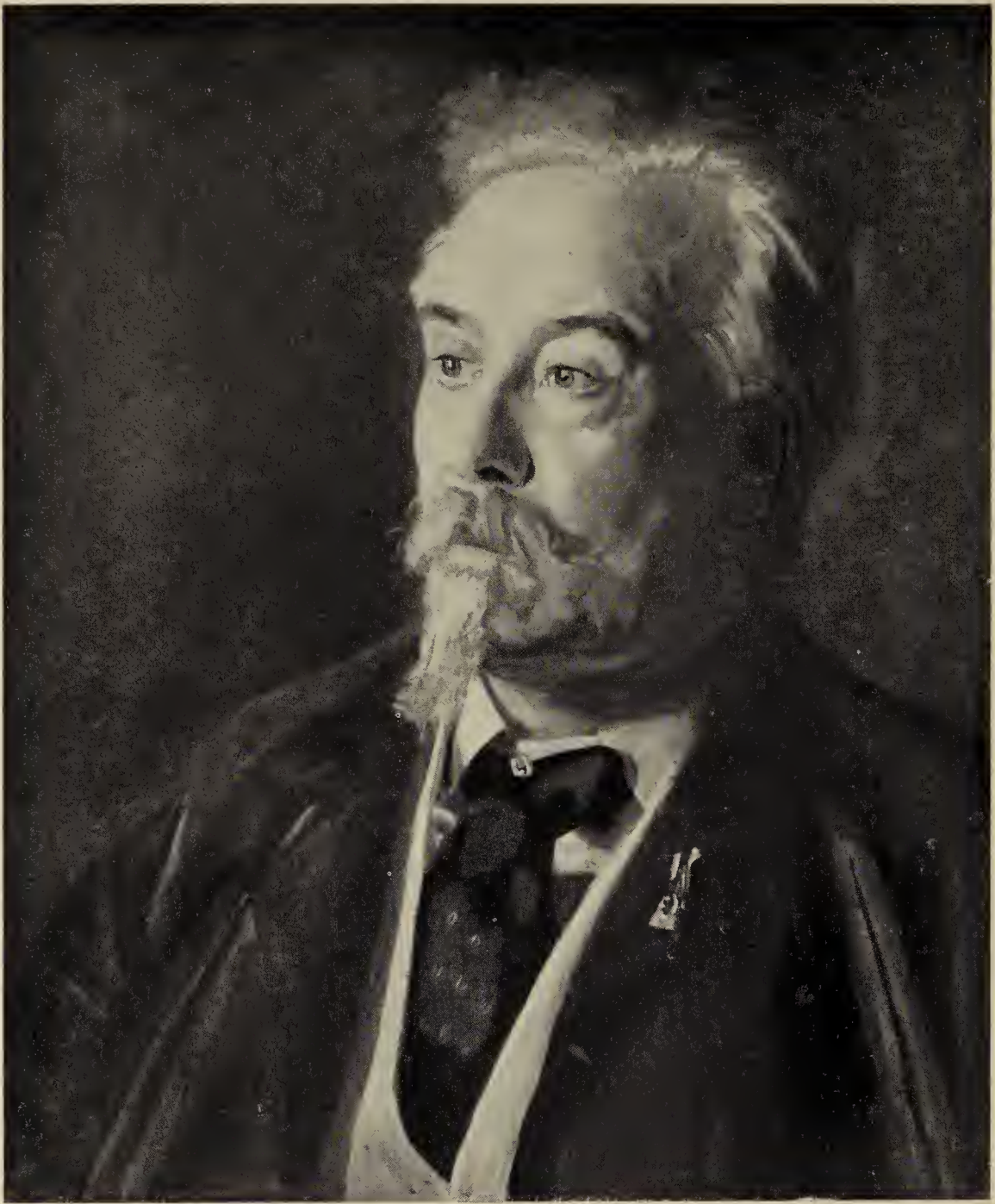
GIFT OF MR. AND MRS. EDWARD DRUMMOND LIBBEY

contemporary artists. For while it was the donor's intention to make the group retrospective in that it should begin with the beginnings of painting in America, the historic aspect of the collection did not, in her mind, preclude such contemporary work as gave promise of the possession of enduring qualities. Her ideal was to develop a well rounded group; to include therein worthy examples of the work of those men who have contributed to our country's artistic heritage; to incorporate as well paintings of the present day which by their quality are entitled to the admiration of the connoisseur.

Mrs. Libbey always regarded the collection as incomplete and inadequate. Among her generous bequests to the Museum was one which makes it possible to keep this group an ever living and growing one. She has provided a fund, not overlarge, but adequate, through which future additions may be made. It will be the purpose of the Museum to so wisely use this fund that the Maurice A. Scott Galleries—for the collection has long since outgrown a single room—may with each new acquisition more closely approach the ideal of their founder.

The space at our disposal permits neither illustration nor mention of all these fine paintings, and our choice of them must at best be somewhat arbitrary. It is made primarily in an effort to give some idea of the general extent of the collection and to indi-

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PORTRAIT OF B. J. BLOMMERS

THOMAS EAKINS

cate in what measure it covers the field. It is our hope that ere long some of the more important gaps may be closed, as others have been in the years since the original assemblage came to the Museum.

Although there were a number of somewhat primitive artists who antedated him, the first American painter to achieve wide—we may say international, for much of his work was done in Eng-

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land—recognition was John Singleton Copley. Born in Boston, his step-father Peter Pelham, a mezzotint engraver, was his earliest teacher. He became a painter of portraits and of figure compositions, acquired distinction, achieved some financial success, and had as pupils such men as Charles Willson Peale. Before the outbreak of the Revolution he had gone abroad, visited Italy, established himself in London, where he remained until death. The portrait of Lord Abercrombie is one of his later works, painted in England. A highly decorative and dignified canvas, it gives ample evidence of his ability to compete with the native English painters.

Destined to achieve even greater fame in his own time than Copley was Benjamin West, the Pennsylvania boy who made good in London. Historical painting in the grand manner was held in as high honor and respect then as it is in disfavor now. West, after he had settled in London, became one of its most notable practitioners. His huge canvases, devoid though they were of artistic feeling and aesthetic appeal, brought him great renown. Upon the death of Sir Joshua Reynolds, he became the second president of the Royal Academy. In sketches and in small canvases he frequently showed considerable skill in drawing and composition although his color was always apt to be cold and hard. One of the best of these smaller pictures is *The Hero Returned*. It is recommended not only by its size, occupying no more space than West is entitled to in an historic survey of American painting, but by the unusual richness of its color, the pleasing though theatrical composition, the accurate though tight drawing.

West is entitled to representation in any American museum, not only on account of his historic position in the annals of our art but because of the interest which he manifested in the young American painters who came to his studio in London where they were always courteously received and helped in the making of their careers. One of the most important of these young men who were befriended by West was Gilbert Stuart, who for eight years was his assistant, but during that time maintained his own individuality, was uninfluenced by West's manner. To quote an earlier article in the *Museum News*, "In an age of affectation, he looked with simplicity directly into the essence of things, untroubled by the mass of detail which was bewildering his contemporaries." In the midst of a successful career in his own right in England where he had painted George III and the Prince of Wales, later George IV, and had gone to Paris where Louis XVI sat for him, he returned to America to do a portrait of Washington.

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FOREST AND STREAM

HENRY W. RANGER

Arrived here, he did not one but many of the Father of his Country, three of them from life, the others replicas, one of the finest of which hangs in the Arthur J. Secor Collection in the Toledo Museum. The Scott Gallery is graced by his portrait of Sir Ashley Cooper, the sixth Earl of Shaftsbury whose grandfather had once held grant to what is now the state of South Carolina. This portrait was painted while Stuart was still resident in England. It is a fine, dignified portrait of rather free brush work, the accessories brought into harmonious relation with the ruddy complexion of the subject.

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AFTER THE MEETING

CECILIA BEAUX

The next important painter in sequence is Thomas Sully who was English born but came to this country early in his life, learned here his art and set himself up as a portrait painter in Richmond, Virginia. After some success there, he continued his studies in Europe under Benjamin West and Sir Thomas Lawrence. He

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painted many notables there as well as in America. He died in Philadelphia at the advanced age of ninety. His portrait of Mrs. Burnett of Philadelphia, which was painted in 1844, shows him at his best. It is not always the good fortune of the portrait painter to be favored with such a charming subject; certainly Sully lost none of the inspiration of a delightful personage. Never did he paint with a surer brush. The firm yet delicate modelling, the flesh tones and the color of the garment are delightful, marking it not only as one of his masterpieces but as a lasting work of art.

We must skip lightly over the Hudson River school and the early American painters of landscape, who are not represented in the collection, and come to George Inness. Inness travelled and studied abroad, returned to this country with a free brush and a broad outlook upon nature. He brought the painting of landscape out of the tight and meticulous style of his American predecessors which was almost engraving in paint, raised it to the high plane which it has ever since retained. His delightful small painting entitled *The Goose Girl* has a looseness of handling, richness of color which makes it a most charming example of his work and foreshadows much of the development which was to come later at the hands of other artists. A much later and larger picture by him entitled *After a Spring Shower* is also included in the Maurice A. Scott Gallery and in the Secor Collection there are two other splendid works by his brush.

The dreamy, visionary Albert Pinkham Ryder built a world of his own, unfettered by any desire for realism. He could be, and sometimes was, minutely faithful to his subject. And perhaps when he does seem to deviate from reality as we know it, it is not so much departure from truth on his part as incomplete knowledge on our own. It is said that his eyes were painfully sensitive to strong light, and hence his subjects are usually represented in the more subdued tones of dawn, dusk, or even night. *The Spirit of Dawn* is charming in color, in the rich texture of the paint, and in the cool misty quality which pervades it, and, while revealing, partially conceals the figure which is so essential to the composition.

Perhaps the most important work in the group is *Sunlight on the Coast* by Winslow Homer. A splendid example of his best work, it shows a heavy green wave breaking over brown rocks and throwing up a great spray at the left, while to the right is a dull gray sea. Sunlight falls on the crest of the wave and the distant water, the ship on the horizon contributing an added note of interest. The preeminent American marine painter, practically

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EARLY MOONRISE

BEN FOSTER

GIFT OF CHARLOTTE SCOTT CHAPIN

self-taught, Homer was past middle age when he gave up the anecdotal picture with which he had achieved great popular success, and retired to Prout's Neck on the Maine coast, there to devote himself to those epics of the sea which have firmly established his artistic reputation. His winters were usually spent in the islands off our southern coast. There he painted those fresh, clean water colors which have given him highest rank in that technique. A purely original painter, uninfluenced by other artists or schools,



NORA BRADY

GEORGE LUKS

he painted subjects as he found them, never striving for prettiness, ever retaining strength and vitality.

As the Homer is probably the greatest, so the Blakelock is with equal probability the most famous painting in the Maurice A. Scott Galleries. When sold at auction it brought the highest price to that time paid for a work by a living American artist. This fact, coupled with the story of Blakelock's tragic life, captured the popular imagination and was productive of endless columns of publicity, making the painting known far and wide. Admissions paid to its exhibition subsequent to its purchase by Mr. and Mrs. Libbey, together with other contributions, produced a fund sufficient to keep the artist in comfort during his last years. In this

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large canvas, called *The Brook by Moonlight*, the silvery tones of the moon shining in the sky and reflected on the water illumine the dark tree and earth forms. The delicate pattern of leaves against lighter sky is most carefully conceived and executed. It is not only Blakelock's greatest accomplishment but a masterpiece of American painting, though a purely fortuitous one. For Blakelock was in no sense a truly great painter. His was at best a harp of but one or two strings. The melody produced in the *Moonlight* is entrancing, but even it does not entitle the artist to a place with the immortals. Perhaps had he had a well-balanced mind he might have developed far beyond the limits which his works show. It is only unfortunate that one who had as great ability as was his could not have been granted a serene mentality for its further development.

Thomas Eakins is joined with Winslow Homer and Albert Ryder by some critics of the present day to form the great trinity of American painters. Whether this judgment, with its neglect of many another master, be accurate is subject to debate. He was taught in Paris by Gerome, and perhaps later turned toward a certain realism in his figure painting by acquaintance with the work of Courbet. His genre scenes, athletic events, and portraits, frequently in full length, are treated with admirable skill, though many of them have a tendency to somber tones. His work is an interesting meeting of tradition and modernism. His portrait of the Dutch artist Blommers, painted in 1904, is a virile, forceful work. It impresses one as faithful and accurate representation, accomplished by most competent technical means. It possesses fine decorative quality and offers more vitality and color than do many of his more suffused works.

Henry W. Ranger lived and studied much abroad, absorbing the spirit of the Barbizon painters, adding it to his own strong individuality and great talent. In his productive work he devoted himself largely to the interpretation of the New England landscape. *Forest and Stream* is one of his delightful personal subjects representing a clear stream flowing between woodland banks. While the technique and the interpretation may be somewhat reminiscent of Corot there is still much of Ranger's own individuality in the picture.

Among the women painters of America, Cecilia Beaux takes high rank. Her painting has a vigorous masculine quality of brushwork combined with bold design and strong color. She places particular emphasis on design and pattern. One may look in vain in her work for the delicacy and fragile charm frequently expected

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THE LEEDS JUGS

EMIL CARLSEN

of a woman painter. After the Meeting, which was first seen in Toledo in the International Exhibition of 1914, and then added to the Scott Gallery, is one of her brilliant, strong, colorful works, particularly interesting in its contrast of boldly defined figure seated in a decorative chair in the foreground and the more casually suggested figures beyond the screen.

Ben Foster, business man who turned artist at the age of thirty, studied in New York and Paris. He had a predilection for moonlight landscapes enlivened by the pattern produced by the

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REDWOOD GROVE

ARTHUR B. DAVIES

ANONYMOUS GIFT

shadows of trees. His contribution to American art was the interpretation of nature at rest. Early *Moonlight*, gift of Charlotte Scott Chapin, shows well his power to depict sleeping nature. Moonlight and starlight cast a silvery glow over the canvas, submerged detail emphasizes essential form of hillside and trees.

George Luks was a vivid personality in American art until his death in 1933. He began his study when Düsseldorf painting was the mode and to the sound technical instruction to be had there he added the inspiration of study in Paris and London. He was strong enough to survive the formulas of the academies and at the beginning of the century he was painting earthy and homely subjects in a highly individual manner, making them beautiful and powerful by his mastery of technique. Nora Brady, a very recent addition to the Scott Gallery, belongs to his notable series of old women. Franz Hals is said to have been his antecedent and here his analogies to the earlier artist are clearly evident—but they are analogies only, for Luks was an artist of sufficient strength to stand wholly on his own merits.

Still-life is notable in the Museum's collections by its almost complete absence except when found as an accessory to portraits or figure pieces. The Leeds Jugs is therefore particularly welcome. Interesting in composition, the combination of the jugs and the onions strewn about them is particularly significant in the study

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of texture, the warm glow which suffuses and enriches the canvas. It is the work of Emil Carlsen who like many another painter began his career as a decorator of porcelain. He has not confined himself to still-life but has also painted landscapes and marines. His paintings have a tender atmospheric quality, a remarkable technical finish which results in a beautiful texture unsurpassed among American artists.

Perhaps the first of the American ultra-moderns was Arthur B. Davies. He was the leader in organizing the Armory Show of 1913, which gave America its first view of the European "isms" in art. His own work combines the mystic and the classic. It harks back to some Golden Age but retains a fairly modern technique. Redwood Grove, inspired by the mountains and great trees of the west, the most recent addition to the Maurice A. Scott Gallery, is the gift of an anonymous donor.

While we have dwelt at some considerable length upon Mrs. Libbey's development of the Maurice A. Scott Gallery, this is not to be taken to indicate that therein lay her chief interest in the Museum. Her enthusiasms were broad as well as deep. She presented to the Museum the major portion of its collection of ceramics, likewise the bulk of that of Oriental art. She worked closely with Mr. Libbey in the assemblage of the Egyptian antiquities. She also acquired many excellent examples of fine lace which have not been exhibited because it was ever her hope that she herself might find the opportunity to supervise the installation of these beautiful and delicate fabrics. She had a very active interest in the educational work of the Museum and in its School of Design and there are none of the Museum's collections which do not bear the imprint of her personality, her excellent taste and her fine judgment.

A lover of music and always devoted there as elsewhere to the highest ideals of quality, she took particular interest in the Museum's endeavors in that field. The Peristyle was designated in Mr. Libbey's will as a memorial to her. In addition to suggesting its architectural form she contributed greatly to the development of the program for its use for the Museum's educational work in the field of music. While in her generous thought of the Museum she did not neglect the future development of its collections she provided that the greater portion of the income from her bequests should be used for the maintenance and development of the Museum's work in the field of music and has thus opened to this institution tremendous opportunity for further service to the people of Toledo.